



Review of Art, Music and Spectacle in the Age of Rubens: The Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi

Citation

Connors, Joseph. 2015. Review of Art, Music and Spectacle in the Age of Rubens: The Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi, eds. Anna C. Knaap and Michael C. J. Putnam. *Renaissance Quarterly* 68 (1): 247–249. doi:10.1086/681325.

Published Version

doi:10.1086/681325

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Art, Music and Spectacle in the Age of Rubens: The Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi. Anna C. Knaap and Michael C. J. Putnam, eds.

Harvey Miller Studies in Baroque Art. London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2013. viii + 352 pp. €125. ISBN 978-1-905375-83-7.

This is a learned and beautiful book about an older, equally learned and beautiful book, the *Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi*, published in 1641, shortly after the deaths of its illustrator, Peter Paul Rubens, and its protagonist, the cardinal-infante Ferdinand, brother of Philip IV of Spain and governor of the Spanish Netherlands. Ferdinand arrived in the Low Countries after a storm-tossed voyage by ship from Barcelona to Genoa and a stunning military victory over the Swedes at Nördlingen in September 1634. Antwerp gave the twenty-six-year-old prince a splendid welcome on 17 April 1635. Anna Knapp, in her introduction to the proceedings of a Harvard symposium of 2010, locates the thirteen ephemeral *apparati* on a map of Antwerp and puts the procession and previous scholarship on it in context. Then history, art history, numismatics, classical studies, theater, music, and museology are called in to explicate the *Pompa Introitus*, both festivity and publication, in this scintillating book.

Unlike previous receptions of Hapsburg royalty, this one omitted the reciprocal pact between ruler and ruled. Ferdinand entered Antwerp as triumphator. For all the splendor of the festivities, as Jonathan Israel reminds us, Antwerp was in a parlous state. It had once been the center of European trade, but since the closing of the Scheldt by the Dutch Beggars in 1585, its lifeblood had been drained. He reminds us that the project to dig a great canal, the Fossa Eugenia or Mariana, to link the Rhine and Meuse, dry up the territory of the Dutch, and eventually link Antwerp with a navigable river

system failed after huge investments. Antwerp needed the new ruler's military prowess; it needed freedom of commerce with the rebels; and it needed a share in the bullion coming out of Spanish America. Without these, it would sink into permanent decline while Amsterdam arose as the new capital of global commerce. The *apparati* were a plea for help that no one could misunderstand.

Rubens designed nine out of the thirteen arches and stages. He provided oil sketches while his studio and an army of carpenters and city painters carried out the huge constructions in record time. He worked with his humanist friend Gevartius (Jan Caspar Gevaerts) to write the inscriptions and eventually the Latin text of the book that followed six years later. Three essays concentrate on the erudition of the *apparati*, though, as Margit Thøfner reminded us in 2007 and Bart Ramakers in this volume, the inscriptions were immediately translated into Dutch and there was much in the festivities to appeal to the ordinary citizen. Michael Putnam reads, or rather listens to the inscriptions with a finely tuned Virgilian ear and catches what no search engine could: the subtle deformations and rephrasings of Virgil's lines, which contemporaries would have instantly registered. The new Aeneas, arriving after a weather-beaten voyage, and the new Augustus, harbinger of peace through victory, were images bound to please the audience of one at whom the decorations were principally aimed. Carmen Arnold-Biucchi, with the fine jeweler's eye that numismatists often develop, shows how the eighty-three Roman coins depicted in the *Pompa Introitus*, some from Rubens's own collection, work their way into the *apparati*. Peter Miller studies the correspondence between Rubens and the senator from Aix, Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc, the most demanding scholar of his age, in an essay that takes us back to a world where antiquarianism and anthropology had not yet diverged.

Rubens's painted arches and stages supplanted the older tradition of tableaux vivants, replacing people with painted simulacra of statues. This opens the field to two essays on *enargeia*, the way statues seem alive and assume human agency. Frank Fehrenbach, who is studying enlivening and vivacity for the entire early modern period, highlights (in a rich Kantorowicz or Bertelli vein) the "unmoved mover," the ruler whose authority comes paradoxically from his silence on parade, who turns into a statue when contemplating statues come to life. Caroline Van Eck explores the grotesque and the statuesque elements in architecture from Serlio and Fontainebleau to Rubens, and asks the fundamental question of why Rubens's architecture seems so alive. Anne Woollett studies the steps Rubens took to expand the original arch and give it epic vigor. The fetching CD that accompanies the essay by Louis Grijp lets us hear resounding trumpets when he looks at the two Fames atop Rubens's seventy-foot wood-and-canvas behemoth.

In the Peace of Westphalia of 1648, the Scheldt was permanently closed and Antwerp condemned to languish as a shadow of its former self. Rubens and Ferdinand both died in 1640. The *Pompa Introitus*, however, carried the memory of this glorious April day to a wider world, as far as Bernini's Rome, where Rubens's ephemeral architecture left a permanent mark on the townscape of the High Baroque.

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